

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 VIENNA 04137 201159Z
ACTION SS-25

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AMEMBASSY DAR S SALAAM
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
USMISSION GENEVA
INFO AMEMBASSY CAPETOWN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MPAUTO

S E C R E T VIENNA 4137

EXDIS

MAPUTO FOR AMBASSADOR YOUNG

GENEVA FOR SECRETARY VANCE

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, OVIP (MONDALE, WALTER F), US, SF, RH
SUBJ: RELEASE OF NAMIBIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS

1. DURING THE COURSE OF TOAY'S DISCUSSIONS WITH
VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE, PRIME MINISTER VORSTER RAISED
THE QUESTION OF THE RELEASE OF NAMIBIANS HELD IN
ZAMBIA AND TANZANIA, REPORTEDLY AT THE BEHEST OF SWAPO
PRESIDENT NUJOMA. WHILE DENYING THAT SOUTH AFRICA
HELD NAMIBIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS, (ONLY "CRIMINALS"),
THE PRIME MINISTER SAID SOUTH AFRICA SHOULD NOT BE THE
ONLY COUNTRY TO RELEASE NAMIBIANS. HE AGREED TO
LOOK "VERY FAVORABLY" ON THE CONTACT GROUP PROPOSAL
THAT AN INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS DECIDE
WHICH NAMIBIANS NOW JAILED BY SOUTH AFRICA WOULD BE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 VIENNA 04137 201159Z

CONSIDERED POLITICAL PRISONERS. IN ADDITION, HE
SUGGESTED THAT IF NAMIBIANS IN TANZANIA AND ZAMBIA
WERE RELEASED HE MIGHT ACT SIMILARLY ON THOSE
PRISONERS HELD BY SOUTH AFRICA. FOREIGN MINISTER BOTHA
ADDED THAT SOUTH AFRICA HAD INTELLIGENCE REPORTS THAT
SOME NAMIBIANS HELD IN TANZANIA AND/OR ZAMBIA WOULD SOON
BE TRIED BY MILITARY TRIBUNALS AND EXECUTED IF FOUND

GUILTY. HE SUGGESTED THAT THESE TRIALS MIGHT BE ACCELERATED IF IT BECAME WIDELY KNOWN THAT A RELEASE OF ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS WAS BEING CONTEMPLATED. HE URGED THE U.S. TO USE ITS INFLUENCE TO SEE THAT SUCH EXECUTIONS DID NOT TAKE PLACE.

2. VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE STATED THAT THE U.S. OPPOSED THE JAILINGS OF INDIVIDUALS FOR THEIR POLITICAL BELIEFS AND THAT OUR OPPOSITION WOULD BE FORCEFULLY STATED WHETHER THE SITUATION WAS WITH SOUTH AFRICA, AN AFRICAN COUNTRY OR THE SOVIET UNION. HE STATED THAT THE U.S. WOULD LOOK INTO THE QUESTION OF NAMIBIANS HELD BY AFRICAN COUNTRIES.

3. FOR AMBASSADOR YOUNG: IF DEPARTMENT APPROVES, SUGGEST YOU USE THE OCCASION OF YOUR TALKS WITH PRESIDENT KAUNDA TO INQUIRE ABOUT THE STATUS OF NAMIBIANS DETAINED IN ZAMBIA, TO INFORM HIM THAT THE QUESTION OF NAMIBIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS HELD BY AFRICAN COUNTRIES HAS BEEN RAISED AS AN ISSUE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS AND MAY BE A DECISIVE FACTOR IN OBTAINING SOUTH AFRICAN AGREEMENT TO THE RELEASE OF THOSE NAMIBIANS HELD IN SOUTH AFRICA. YOU SHOULD STATE THAT WHILE WE HAVE NO INDEPENDENT VERIFICATION OF SOUTH AFRICA'S CONCERNS ABOUT POSSIBLE EXECUTIONS, WE HOPE THAT THESE ALLEGATIONS ARE WITHOUT FOUNDATION AND THAT THE ZAMBIAN GOVERNMENT WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ENSURE THE SAFETY AND WELL BEING OF NAMIBIANS IN ZAMBIA. WE WILL WANT TO DISCUSS THIS SUBJECT WITH ZAMBIAN OFFICIALS AT A LATER STAGE, BUT YOU SHOULD
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 VIENNA 04137 201159Z

EMPHASIZE THAT WE BELIEVE ALL NAMIBIANS NOW JAILED FOR POLITICAL REASONS SHOULD BE RELEASED SO THAT THEY MAY PARTICIPATE IN FREE ELECTIONS IN NAMIBIA.

4. FOR DAR ES SALAAM: IF DEPARTMENT APPROVES, YOU SHOULD MAKE A SIMILAR APPROACH TO THE TANZANIAN GOVERNMENT AT AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL PREFACING YOUR REMARKS THAT WHILE WE LOOK FORWARD TO FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH THE TANZANIANS ON THE NAMIBIAN ISSUE, WE THOUGHT IT PRUDENT TO RAISE THE POLITICAL PRISONER QUESTION AT THIS TIME. YOU MAY WISH TO RECALL THAT THIS QUESTION WAS DISCUSSED INFORMALLY WITH TANZANIANS OFFICIALLY DURING MCHENRY VISIT. MEEHAN

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